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Preach'd at the

ANNUAL-FEAST

OF THE

G E N T L E M E N

Educated at

TIVERTON-School,

Sept. the 5th, 1728.

IN THE

Parish-Church

OF

Tiverton, DEVON.

By *JOHN JONES*, M. A.
Fellow of *Balliol College* in *OXFORD*.

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TO THE
Worshipful *and* Reverend *the*
STEWARDS.

Sir WILLIAM CAREW, *Bar^t.*

JOHN BAMFYLD, *Esq;*

SAMUEL CRUWYS, *Esq;*

WILLIAM COLMAN, *jun^r, Esq;*

SAMUEL BURRIDGE, *Esq;*

The Rev^d Mr. W^m. MERVIN, *jun^r.*

The Rev^d Mr. JOSEPH SANFORD.

This Sermon, Publish'd at their
Request, is humbly inscrib'd
by

Their most obedient Servant

JOHN JONES.

TO THE
Worshipful and Reverend As

STEWARDS

OF THE WILLIAM CAREW FUND

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The Rev. Mr. Joseph Stanford.

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by

Thos. Wm. of the same

JOHN JONES

COLOSSIANS II. 8.

Beware lest any Man spoil you thro' Philosophy and vain Deceit, after the Tradition of Men, after the Rudiments of the World, and not after Christ.

WHEN the Fulness of Time came, wherein it pleased God to enlighten the World, with the glorious Gospel of his beloved Son; *Philosophy* and *Learning* were every where in the greatest Credit and Esteem, and in all their several Branches and Denominations were advanc'd to the highest Pitch, that they could possibly be carried by the force of human Invention and Industry. The *Gentiles*, amongst whom it was St. Paul's peculiar Province to preach the Gospel, were all in some degree Philosophers, and form'd their Studies and Manners after the Example of the *Athenians*, whose military Glory had now yielded to their Ambition of excelling in *Philosophy* and *Eloquence*; and who, as the Historian of the Acts of the Apostles informs us, spent their Time in nothing else, but *either to tell, or to hear some new thing*. The *Romans* had now made themselves Masters of the Sciences of the conquer'd Nation; and partly by inviting the most celebrated Philosophers

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from

TO THE
Worshipful and Reverend Mr.

STEWARDS

OF THE WILLIAM CAREW TRUST

JOHN BARNARD, Esq.

SAMUEL CREW, Esq.

WILLIAM COLLIER, Esq.

SAMUEL BURRIDGE, Esq.

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THOMAS JONES

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from *Athens*, and partly by sending their noble Youth thither for Education, were become their Rivals in Philosophy, which came recommended to them in the Writings of their most celebrated *Orator*, as the Refiner of human Life, the great Discoverer of Truth, and the Mistress of all moral and intellectual Virtues. One Day spent according to the Precepts of Philosophy is to be prefer'd to an Immortality of Vice, says the most Eloquent of the *Romans*; *Beware lest any Man spoil you thro' Philosophy and vain Deceit*, says the most eloquent *Christian Orator*. As both the *Grecian* and *Roman* Writers were frequent and extravagant in the Praises of this Idol of theirs, which they had set up as the Standard of all divine and human Knowledge; so on the other hand, our Apostle in several Passages of his Epistles seems to derogate from its Value, and to be apprehensive of its dangerous Influence on his Converts to the Gospel. *I have determin'd to know nothing among you*, says he to the *Corinthians*, *save Jesus Christ and him Crucified. My Preaching was not with enticing Words of Man's Wisdom, for the Wisdom of this World is Foolishness with God. If any Man among you seem to be Wise in this World, let him become a Fool that he may be Wise. The Lord knoweth the Thoughts of the Wise that they are vain.*

That the *Apostle* in these and the like Texts does not intend universally and peremptorily to condemn all Philosophy and human Literature, and entirely to exclude them from the Regard and Study of a Christian, will easily appear from his own Practice, which must be
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allow'd as the best Comment on his Words. At his own native City of *Tarsus*, he had made a considerable Proficiency in the *Grecian* Learning; and at *Jerusalem*, as himself informs us, was bred up at the Feet of the Jewish Doctor *Gamaliel*, whose prudent Determination in the case of the Apostles before the *Jewish* Council, shews him to be a Man of no ordinary Capacities. After his Conversion, by the Strictness and Accuracy of his Reasoning, and the Sublimity of his Eloquence, 'tis evident he thought it not unlawful, to make use of his ordinary human Accomplishments, in the Propagation and Defence of Christianity. His Address to the *Athenians*, *The God whom ye ignorantly worship, him I declare unto you*, was such an artificial Introduction, as is no where to be equall'd by their own most famous Orators. His quoting the Greek Poets, especially *Aratus*, whose Poem is Philosophical, proves him to be equally a Master of their most refin'd and most abstruse Knowledge. That a small number of chosen Books and Parchments, which were probably his Common-place-Book, or Extracts from the same, were his constant Companions in his Travels, appears from his especial request to *Timothy* to send them to him from *Troas*: and 'twas his earnest Advice to that his beloved Disciple, *to give attendance to Reading and Study, and to give himself wholly to these things*, that he might be able to *exhort and teach* with Profit to the Church committed to his Charge. Thus it appears, both from the *Apostle's* Practice and Advice, that he was no Enemy to the Sciences

of human Acquisition and Invention. The *Primitive Fathers*, tho' they frequently complain of *Logick* and *Disputations*, as productive of *Heresies* and *Dissentions* in the Church, yet found themselves oblig'd, in order to refute these *Heresies*, to have recourse to the same Arts from whence they sprung.

Upon the whole it must be allow'd, that human Science, as far as it contributes to direct our natural Faculties, to advance our Reason, and to subdue our Passions: and from the Contemplation of created Beings, points out to us the Being and Attributes of the eternal Original, is an Exercise worthy of a rational Creature, on many accounts serviceable to Religion: and therefore the Study of it is not only Lawful, but becomes our Duty. Improvement in true and useful Learning is one of those good and perfect Gifts, that cometh down from the Father of Lights: and it seems not to have happen'd by Chance, but to have been design'd by the peculiar Appointment of divine Providence, that before *Christianity* was revealed, *Philosophy* should have receiv'd the finishing Stroke from human Invention; that it might become what the *Apostle* calls it in the Text, *the Rudiments of the World*, or an initial Preparation to a more perfect Institution. 'Tis observable, that *St. Paul* elsewhere gives the same Name to the Rites and Ceremonies in the *Jewish Dispensation*: As the Law then was to the *Jews*, so was *Philosophy* to the *Heathens*, a *School-Master* to bring them unto *Christ*.

I suppose it will be unnecessary to attempt any further Vindication of my Text, especially before this Audience thus assembled in a solemn and religious manner, to pay their grateful Acknowledgments to the divine Goodness, for the Benefit and Blessing of a learned Education. The Text, according to the true Intention of the *Apostle*, is a Lesson of very important Advice to the *Christian Scholar*; and a Preservative against the dangerous Consequences, which may attend either the Hearer or Reader from the Discourses or Writings of the living *Learned*, or the Dead. It arms him with Caution against the Artifices of those Men who misapply their Learning and Eloquence, with an Intention to seduce their Hearers: and teaches him to make a true Estimate of the Moral and Philosophical Notions of his *Heathen Classical* Authors; which as they are the *Traditions of Men*, must needs be subject to Vanity and Error; as they are only the *Rudiments of the World*, must therefore be miserably defective, and fall very short of the most perfect Institution of the *Gospel*. It informs him, that Learning is to assume a new Manner in obedience to Revelation; that the moral Maxims of his admired Authors are no longer to be regarded as the Rule of his Belief and Practice, and that all their Errors and Defects are to be supplied and corrected by the unerring Standard of Truth, the sacred *Oracles of God*.

In order to illustrate this Advice of the *Apostle*, I shall in the

First

First Place enquire, What Sort of Learned Men the *Apostle* in the Text advises us to beware of.

Secondly, I shall examine into the Vanity and Deceitfulness of the *Philosophy* of the *Heathen* Writers. And,

Thirdly, I shall endeavour to shew the good Agreement and Harmony that there is between the *Christian Religion* and *Human Learning*, as they tend mutually to assist and promote each other.

First, I am to enquire what sort of Learned Men the *Apostle* in the Text advises us to beware of. And these were probably of the same Stamp and Character with those Pretenders, whose unwarrantable Practices occasion'd his severe Epistle to the *Corinthians*. Men, who being proud of their Eloquence, and ostentatious of their Learning, by the affectation of Beauty and Subtily in their Discourses, corrupted the Purity and Simplicity of the *Christian Doctrines*; and by endeavouring to wrest *Christianity*, so as to make it subordinate and conformable to the *Hypothesis* of that Sect of Philosophers, in which themselves had been educated, debased the Dignity of the *Christian Religion*, and destroyed the Unity of the Church. These Men, contrary both to the Example and Advice of the *Apostle*, came with *enticing words of Man's Wisdom*, and not avoiding profane and vain Babblings, and Oppositions of Science falsely so call'd, not only err'd concerning the Faith themselves, but by these Arts seduced their Hearers into the same pernicious

nicious Errors. The Divisions they were accustomed to before their Conversion, might easily induce both these Instructors and their Audience to imagine, that *Religion* was to have its Sects as well as *Philosophy*: and as the converted *Corinthians* gave themselves various Denominations, one saying, *I am of Paul*, another of *Apollos*; so the *Colossians* might easily be persuaded by these *Philosophical Guides* to say they were *Christians*, some upon the System of *Epicurus*, others of *Plato* or *Aristotle*.

Preachers of this Character are justly chargeable with Vanity and Deceit, while out of an Ambition of Shewing their own Parts, rather than a Desire of promoting the Salvation of their Audience, they *preach Themselves*, and not the Lord *Jesus*; at best entertaining them with airy and imperfect Speculations, instead of the important and substantial Truths of the *Gospel*, and frequently Poisoning their Minds with pernicious Errors and damnable Heresies. Very necessary therefore was the Warning of the *Apostle* to the *Colossians*, to beware lest such Men should *Spoil* them of their Religion: and not to them only, but it is a Caution also of standing use to all *Christians* in every succeeding Age of the Church; whose Peace has been all along infested by some one or other of these bold Pretenders; who, by the usual Artifice of dressing up a false and deceitful Philosophy, in the specious Ornaments of Eloquence, have endeavoured to make themselves Masters of some new Sect and Party in Religion. Force of long Custom, and Prejudice of Education, might be urged
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as an Excuse for the Deceivers whom *St. Paul* censures; but a modern *Heretick*, who attempts the Subversion of that Faith in which he has been educated from his Infancy, is a Creature of a more virulent and malignant Quality: The Spirit of Pride and Delusion must be so far prevalent in him, as to conquer all those good Habits he has received from early Institution; and which on that account, in well disposed Minds, become lasting and immutable. If therefore the *Apostle's* Caution was necessary, with regard to those primitive Deceivers, it ought more particularly to be remember'd by us at present, that it may be our Preservative from the Artifices of the more bitter Enemy of our Church, the *Modern Heretick*.

I come now, *Secondly*, To examine into the Vanity and Deceitfulness of the *Philosophy* of the *Heathen Writers*.

Whatever is the Production of human Understanding must needs be of a mixt and heterogeneous Nature, and partake of the good and bad Qualities of the Cause from whence it springs. The Soul of Man, tho' vastly obscur'd and depraved by the original Corruption of our Natures, yet even in its Ruins appears great and admirable, and retains some Traces of that Divine Image, after which it was first created. But, as *the Lord knoweth that the Thoughts of Man are but vain, and his Heart deceitful above all things*; whatever is the Result of the most improv'd Invention, tho' it may in some Particulars attain to Truth
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and Excellency, yet will certainly have its share of Vanity and Deceit.

Human Philosophy being one of these mix'd Productions, tho' it frequently lays down useful and excellent Rules for the Conduct of Life, and sometimes entertains rational and just Notions of the Deity, yet must necessarily be subject to many Faults and Blemishes, which may in general be reduced to these Two, namely, Uncertainty and Error.

In the first Place, the Philosophy of the *Heathens* was in all respects very doubtful and uncertain. Had they all agreed in one single and uniform System, the Universality of Consent might have been some Argument for its Truth and Certainty. Yet even such a System as this, contrived and improv'd by the concurrent Invention of all Mankind, embraced by all, and disputed by none, would still be full of Doubts and Uncertainties, and could pretend to no further Extent and Infallibility, than the dark and finite Understanding of Man, to which it ow'd its Original. But in a prodigious Multitude of *Seets*, almost equal in number to their eminent *Professors*, and all of the same Authority; in such an infinite variety of Opinions, always clashing with one another, and constantly disputed; every particular *Seet* opposing all the rest, and frequently not consistent with itself; a studious Enquirer after Truth must needs be mightily puzzl'd and bewilder'd in his Search. The *Roman Orator*, whose extensive Genius had ranack'd all the various Stores of the *Grecian Learning*, from that Variety became the

most uncertain Philosopher of all Men; he gives the Preference to the Maxims of every particular *Set* in its Turn; always as inconsistent in his Sentiments, as he is constant to his Eloquence. 'Twas the whole Profession of the *Academicks*, one of their most considerable *Sects*, to doubt of every thing. And *Socrates*, who was allow'd both by Men and Oracles, to be the wisest of all Men, declared, that all that he knew, was that he knew Nothing. What Truth and Certainty then can be expected, where Doubt and Ignorance become Sciences?

But *Christianity* on the contrary, in every thing that it enjoyns us, either to believe or practice, like Truth is always simple, uniform and consistent, and breaths nothing but the Spirit of Unity and Agreement: it teaches us to *Speak all the same things*, to avoid all *Schisms* and *Divisions*, to be perfectly joyned together in the same Mind and the same Judgment, to acknowledge no other Master or Law-giver besides our Lord *Jesus Christ*, and to have recourse to the Sacred *Scriptures* alone, as the Fountain of our Knowledge, and the Guide of our Actions. Should the most eloquent among Men, nay, even an *Angel from Heaven*, preach any other Gospel than that we have receiv'd, we are to deem him *accursed*. So that we have no time to lose in deliberating what Rule we are to follow, no Distraction in our Choice. And since the Gospel is preach'd unto us, not as the Tradition of Men, but as in truth it is, the *Word of God*; confirm'd by the Testimony of the great Author of infinite

finite Truth, and own'd by his *Holy Spirit* to be of his Inspiration, all Doubts and Scruples must immediately vanish away, and be entirely swallow'd up in absolute Certainty.

Secondly, The *Philosophy* of the *Heathens* is chargeable with many gross Errors, both in Principles and Practice, flowing from a Corruption of the Will, as well as Defect in the Understanding. I shall instance only in a few, which are the most remarkable.

The *Epicureans* entertain very mean and despicable Notions of the Nature both of God and Man; while they represent the Deity as a Being entirely given up to Ease and Idleness, and never at leisure either to create or govern this lower World; and ascribe the Original of Themselves, and the whole Universe, to the Caprice of Chance, and fortuitous Concurrence of Matter. They would persuade us, that the chief Happiness of Man consists in the Gratification of his Senses; and that when we Die we shall fall into Nothing, and entirely perish like the brute Beasts, which they would have us imitate in our Lives.

The *Stoicks* agree with the *Epicureans* in this respect, that they give us a very mean and despicable Idea of God, while they represent him as tyed down without any Freedom or Liberty of Action, by an uncontrollable fatal Necessity: But on the contrary, when they speak of themselves, their Rant is extravagant, and their Pride unsufferable. This is the thing which Philosophy promises us, says *Seneca*, to be equal with God. The good Man is a Companion of the Gods, and not a Suppliant.

The Gods are better than Men only by duration. Nay, further he says, that good Men exceed the Gods in this respect, that They are good by Necessity, Men by Choice. How much righter is the Language of holy Scripture, that exhorts us to *cast down all high Imaginations, and to bring into Captivity every Thought to the Obedience of Christ*; that teaches us to humble our selves if we would be exalted, and to aspire to the divine Favour by Mortification and Humility.

Vanity in some degree or other was the common Distemper of all the Heathen Writers. *Cicero*, who had himself no small Share of this Failing, observes that the Philosophers, who had written Treatises of the Contempt of Glory, inscribed their own Names before their Works, and thus made their Title-Page a Confutation of their whole Books. How much more just and noble are the *Christian's* Sentiments of Glory; who is regardless of that empty Applause that depends on the Breath of the Populace, while his own Conscience condemns him not, and an All-seeing *God* approves his Actions. Self-Murder, which is the most daring Insult of the divine Authority, and an Instance of the most abject Cowardice, was accounted a piece of *Roman* Bravery and Fortitude. A *Wretch*, who meanly made his escape from Life, because he had not Resolution enough to bear its Misfortunes, was celebrated as a Spectacle worthy of the Gods themselves. Revenge, the pleasure of weak and impotent Minds, has found no less Patrons than *Aristotle* and *Isocrates*.
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'Tis a mean and servile thing, says the former, to bear an Injury unreveng'd; and *Isocrates* thinks it as base a thing to be out-done by Enemies in ill Turns, as by Friends in good Ones. But what a heroical Mastery of our Passions do we owe to Christianity? which teaches us not only to bear Injuries with Patience, and with readiness to forgive them; but even to overcome them with Returns of Kindness and Benevolence; *to love our Enemies, and pray for our Persecutors*; that by so doing we may *heap coals of fire upon their heads*, which will melt their obdurate Natures into a Resemblance of our fervent Charity.

Intemperance and Sensuality, tho' openly recommended by none but the *Epicureans*, yet were most notoriously practiced, not only by the vulgar Heathens, but even by the Philosophers themselves, in opposition to their own Precepts. Their Reasons as well as their Motives were too weak to restrain the inordinate Appetites of Mankind: But how forcible and sublime an Argument of our Obligation to Temperance and Purity does *St. Paul* afford us, when he represents our Bodies, not after the manner of *Plato*, as the Clogs and Prisons of our Souls; but as the Sacred *Temples of the holy Spirit of God*?

From this Representation of the Vices and Errors of the *Heathen* World, it appears that the *Apostle* had very good reason to caution his *Colossian* Converts against a Philosophy so vain and deceitful, that it entertained them only with Uncertainties, and would spoil them of their Vertue here, and their Happiness hereafter.

after. But we may observe, he only warns them of the Dangers that may possibly arise from those Writings, but does not exclude us from their Use and Advantages. The only Danger we can possibly apprehend from a *Christian's* reading the Philosophy of the *Heathens*, is lest he should make it the Rule of his Faith and Actions, and either set it up in opposition, or place it on a level, with the most perfect Institution of the *Gospel*. Should we again establish Philosophy as the Standard of Truth, it will prove a Rock that will make shipwreck both of our Faith and Conscience; but when its kept within its proper Bounds, and taught its Subordination to Religion, it not only becomes an Ornament of Christian Life, but is highly serviceable to the Truth which is in *Christ Jesus*. A Mind thoroughly rooted and grounded in the Principles of the *Christian Religion*, which to the Study of *Heathen Writers* brings with it the Preparation of the *Gospel*, will be in no danger of being corrupted by their Errors; nay, rather it will assimilate whatever Nourishment it receives, into its own Substance and Spirit of Christianity.

Tho' we are not to make their Sentiments the Rule of our Actions, yet the Purity of their Language, the Justness of their Stile, and the Accuracy of their Reasoning, are always worthy of our Imitation; these are proper and useful upon all Occasions, and more particularly so, when we are to treat of Subjects of the highest Dignity, and the last Importance. Our holy Religion has not divested Men of
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their human Nature and their Passions ; Christians, as well as other Men, are to be reason'd with and convinc'd by Arguments, to be moved and perswaded by Eloquence. If Argumentation and Eloquence have often prov'd Successful in making even Vice and Error appear plausible and agreeable, how great will be their Force and Beauty, when they are employ'd in the Cause of Justice, Virtue and eternal Truth. These Accomplishments, thus subordinate and subservient to Religion, when joyn'd with the powerful Example of a virtuous and holy Life, form the compleat and amiable Character of the *Christian-Scholar*.

Which brings me under my *Third* general Head, to shew the good Agreement and Harmony that there is between the *Christian Religion* and *Human Learning*, as they tend mutually to assist and promote each other.

The *Christian Religion* is highly Serviceable and Beneficial to human Learning, by removing all the Obstacles to Meditation, by contributing to the Improvement of the Faculties of our Minds, and by directing us to the true and proper use of all our Studies.

Learning, like the other Gifts of God, does not come into our Possession, but on the usual Condition of our own concurrent Endeavours, and is not to be attained without previous Exercise and Discipline, and diligent Search and Application of our own. The Mind is liable too frequently to be diverted from this necessary

ry Attention, and to be render'd incapable of close Application; while either sympathizes with the Disorders, or obeys the craving Appetites of the Body; when it is either dejected with Grief, or disturbed by Fear and Anxiety. For the removal of these Obstacles to Study and Contemplation, we are highly indebted to our most holy Religion; as it lays us under the strictest Injunctions, gives us the most excellent Rules and strongest Motives for the subduing our Lusts and Passions, mortifies our Pride and Self-Conceit, those bitter Enemies to Instruction; and so frequently recommends the Virtues of Sobriety and Chastity, Industry and Humility: As it takes away the weight of Afflictions, and renders our Minds content and chearful in every Condition of Life: As it arms our Souls against the Fear of Death, relieves us from the Terrors of a guilty Conscience, and any anxious Sollicitude about our future State. In a word, there is nothing that is apt to disturb that Serenity of Mind, which is requisite to the Contemplation of Speculative Truth, but what finds either a Discouragement, or a Remedy from Religion.

Another way that Religion contributes to the Advancement of Learning, is by the Improvement it gives to the Faculties of the Mind, by employing it on the Contemplation of great and noble Objects. The *Holy Scripture*, at one single comprehensive View, presents us with such an amazing Scene of Action, gives us such noble Ideas of the Wisdom, Power, Justice and Goodness of *Almighty God*,
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in the Creation of the World, the Original State and Fall of our first Parents, the miraculous Dispensations of his Providence to his chosen People; and above all, in the Stupendous Mystery of Man's Redemption: that were they only Fictions, they would still challenge our Attention; and we might boldly defy Nature, Science, or History to entertain us with Objects of equal Grandeur, Novelty or Variety. And this important Knowledge is convey'd to us in such a surprising Diversity of Language; some times in such an unaffected and majestick Simplicity of Expression; in other places in the most nervous Strains of Oratory, and the most exalted Flights of Poetry; that all the Beauties which Language borrows from Art, all the different Excellencies of all other Writers are comprized and exceeded in this Single Book, which of it self speaks its Author to be Divine. Had *Longinus* read the Holy Scriptures through, when he proposed the Method, I am at present treating of, of teaching his Reader a Sublime manner in Sentiment and Language, by an habitual Contemplation of the noblest Images and Expressions in the most approved Authors; I suppose he would scarce have contented himself with one Quotation from Scripture, since from thence he might have been supplied with much better Examples to all his Rules of the *Sublime*. If *Homer* seems of all the Poets to have the best claim to Inspiration, from his pretending to understand the Language of the Deities; what an invaluable Treasure is the

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holy Scripture, which we are certain was indited by the real Inspiration of the only True God? 'Tis no wonder, that the Reading of the Scriptures is discouraged in a Church, where the Ignorance of the People is the Scheme of Ecclesiastical Policy.

Moreover, Religion not only contributes to our Improvement in Learning, but also directs us in applying it to its true and proper Use, which is the Glory of God, and the Benefit of Mankind.

As there are some Drugs, which tho' Poisons in themselves, yet when mixt in a proper Composition, become sovereign and salutary Medicines: so Learning, which when incorporated with Religion, serves to many excellent Ends and Purposes, when destitute of the Direction of *God's holy Spirit*, is of a virulent and pestilential Nature; like an uncultivated Soil, exerts its Power only in the Production of noxious or unprofitable Weeds, and manifests its Greatness only in the Extent of its Infection. 'Tis owing to the want of this proper Mixture and Temperament of Religion and Learning, that Wit transgresses the Bounds of Civility and Conscience, deals its Wounds blindly and indifferently to Vice and Virtue, and sometimes dares to level its Artillery against Heaven itself. 'Tis owing to this, that Poetry becomes a Prostitute to Vice and Obscenity; that Oratory stoops to the mean Employment of Flattery and Oppression; that Histories are crowded with Falshood and Partiality; and Faction and Heresies are frequently published from the Press, and sometimes

times from the Pulpit. Whereas under the proper Guidance and Direction of Religion, there's not one of these Accomplishments but would be of eminent Service to the Cause of Virtue, and prove at once delightful and profitable to Mankind. Wit, that volatile Meteor of the Imagination, which when left alone to its own natural Impetuosity, is liable to run into boundless Extravagancies, when under the proper Curb and Regulation of Religion, in many Cases becomes exceedingly serviceable, when all other Means would prove ineffectual: There are several Tempers, that had rather be laugh'd, than perswaded out of their Vices; and would sooner be enamour'd with Virtue, when cloath'd in the Garb of Imagination, than that of Reason. Wit thus employ'd assumes a sacred and a venerable Character, and like Musick, hath with very good Success been introduc'd into the House of God. Cicero makes Virtue a requisite Ingredient in the Character of a perfect Orator; as a Quality which by conciliating the Favour and Esteem of the People, and giving a Man Credit and Reputation in the World, would add Weight and Authority to his Discourses. If Virtue be so advantageous a Qualification in a Political Orator, it will be in a more eminent manner necessary to him, who is appointed to preach the Word of God, and promote the Salvation of Mankind. Tho' he *speaks with the Tongues of Men and of Angels*, yet if his Life be not answerable to his Doctrine, his Audience will probably make a wrong Choice, despise his Doctrine, and

follow his Example. Poetick Fancy, which generally magnifies and overshoots its Aim, might from Religion be furnisht with Subjects, where there is no Danger of being too lavish of the *Sublime*. Religion gives History its impartial Truth, and useful Instruction; and turns Natural Philosophy into a Proof and Elogium of the Being and Attributes of *Almighty God*. In a word, every Kind of Science seems to lay aside all its Blemishes, Imperfections and Superfluities; and to move with greater Ease and Vigour within its own Sphere of Activity, when guided by the over-ruling attractive Influence of Religion.

As human Literature is thus considerably indebted for its Advancement, by making it self subordinate to divine Revelation, so it endeavours to make grateful Returns, by illustrating the Truth and Excellency of the *Christian* Religion; and by laying us under stronger Obligations to a more exalted Piety and Virtue.

Truth, which is always ambitious of being view'd in the clearest Point of Light, courts the nicest Inspection of the most accurate Enquirer; and the most excellent Performance often loses its deserv'd Esteem, by the Incompetency of the Judge. If human Literature any way contributes to the Improvement of the natural Faculties and Sagacity of the Mind, it must certainly be agreeable to the Religion which was instituted by that *God*, who requires of us not a blind Obedience, but a *reasonable Service*; and who would lose Part of the Glory that accrues to him from
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the Wisdom of his Works, and the Justice of his Laws, unless Education furnish'd Men with Capacities to observe and admire them. The Vicissitude of Day and Night, the regular Succession of Seasons, and the Revolutions of the heavenly Bodies, which, upon the account of their Constancy, pass by as common Occurrences, unregarded by the Vulgar, when view'd thro' the Opticks of Science, are so many Demonstrations of the Wisdom and Providence of *Almighty God*. *One Day may tell another, and one Night may certify another*; to the unlearned *there is neither Speech nor Language*, but thro' the Organs of Philosophy *their Voices are heard among them, the Heavens declare the Glory of God, and the Firmament sheweth his Handy-work*. The Language of *holy Scripture* would in many Passages appear barbarous and unintelligible to us, unless *Criticism* furnisht us with parallel Quotations from *Heathen* Contemporaries, or *Antiquity*, by explaining the Customs and Manners of former Ages, discover'd the Allusion, and solv'd the Difficulty. Our certain and determinate Knowledge of the Completion of *Scripture Prophecies*, in a great Measure depends on the Assurances which *Heathen* Authors afford to History and Chronology. Our general way of judging of Excellency is from Comparison, and 'tis by the Experience we acquire from the reading of various Authors, that we are enabled to judge of their respective Merits, and Pretensions to Precedence. The *Classical* Scholar, from being conversant with the noblest Genius's among the *Heathens*, pronounces with Authority, that all the Flights
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Of both *Greek* and *Roman* Poets ; that the Thunder of *Demosthenes*, and the Flow of *Cicero's* Eloquence, must yield the Preference to the Poetry and Persuasion of the sacred Authors. The *Moralist* discovers, that the Lectures of renowned *Socrates*, and divine *Plato*, are but as *sounding Brass* and a *tinkling Cymbal*, when compared with the Precepts of *Christianity*: and that the Happiness, which every System of *Ethicks* promised to its Followers, is only to be found in the *Christian* Religion. The *Politician* acknowledges, that nothing could be more exactly calculated for the Peace and Welfare of Society, that nothing could lay so strict a Restraint upon the Conscience, or so effectually Curb the inordinate Passions and Extravagancies of Mankind. Thus all the Sciences, *like Stars in their Courses*, fight against Atheism and Irreligion, and darting their united Rays upon *Christianity*, give a glorious Lustre to its Truth and Excellency.

Learning is still farther serviceable to Religion, by laying us under stronger Obligations to a more exalted Piety and Virtue.

Education gives a Man a kind of Superiority among his own Species, and by adding Weight and Authority to his Words, and Influence to his Example, puts him in a Capacity of being a publick Good and Benefit to Mankind. We may be assured therefore, that an All-just God, who has declared, that he will require of every Man in Proportion to the Talents he has entrusted him with, will expect from the Learned, an active and vi-

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gorous Exercise of their Endowments, in promoting his Glory, and the Benefit of their Fellow-Creatures. In the Possessions of the Mind, as well as in those of Fortune, there is a Covetousness equally detestable; and as unus'd Riches are no better than Poverty, so concealed Science is very little different from Ignorance and Sloth. Superior Knowledge is not bestow'd on us for the Gratification of our Pride or Curiosity, but for the Glory of God, and the Service of our Friends and Country. Every Attack upon our Religion or Liberty, every Cry of distressed Innocence, or craving Poverty, is a Demand made by God himself upon the Abilities of our Fortunes and our Minds. The Man of Learning, that grovels in the base Pursuits of sordid Interest, or sensual Pleasures, is a monstrous Piece of Absurdity; for 'tis the natural Bent and Tendency of the Studies, in which he has been educated, from the Experience of intellectual Pleasures, to give him more exalted Notions of the Dignity of human Soul, and of the Vanity of all other Possessions and Enjoyments, besides those which are seated in the Mind. Nay further, Learning not only lays us under strong Obligations to lead virtuous and pious Lives, but ought to teach us to distinguish even our Virtues from those of the Illiterate, by an eminently graceful and amiable Manner of putting them in Practice. This masterly Excellence of Virtue is better illustrated by Example than Description: 'Tis not for want of living Instances, but to avoid the Suspicion of Flattery, or the Offence

Offence of Modesty, that I descend to the Grave to remind you of the Characters of Two worthy and illustrious *Gentlemen*, once Encouragers of this *Solemnity*, as they were of every thing that is laudable: who were call'd away by the Decrees of the divine Will, from the exercise of the generous Virtues of Friendship and Liberality, from the Encouragement of Religion and Learning, from the Service of their Country, and the Enjoyment and Expectation of their Friends, to grace the most glorious Assembly of Saints and Angels. 'Tis but Justice to pay this Tribute to their Memories, 'twill be our eternal interest to Imitate their Virtues. But I make haste to divert you from this melancholly, tho' dear Remembrance, to the more pleasing Task of discharging Part of that infinite Debt of Gratitude, which we owe to those happy Instruments, which were employ'd by the Hand of *God*, to convey to us the Blessings of a liberal Education.

Of all the Instances of publick Liberality, we have the most rare and uncommon in the Person of our pious and generous *Benefactor*, who without the usual Incitements to noble Designs of this Nature, from the Example of illustrious Ancestors, or an habitual Fondness to long accustom'd Studies, only from the natural Judgment of his own excellent Spirit, assisted by the *holy Spirit of God*, knew the Value of Learning, of which Education had given him no Experience; and tho' he has amply provided against the Want of it in others, yet it is impossible for the most eloquent Object of his

his Charity, ever to do Justice to his Memory. As he was Pious and Munificent in the Disposal of his well-gotten Wealth, he was no less Fortunate in having it deposited in the Hands of Men of Prudence and Integrity, who by the discreet and conscientious Discharge of their Trust, have prov'd themselves a Succession of new Benefactors. 'Tis an Honour, as well as a Duty, to return our grateful Acknowledgments to that excellent Man, a common Father to us all; whose admirable Skill, actuated by an indefatigable Industry, first form'd our tender Minds to a Taste of polite Learning, and to the Notions of solid Virtue, and uncorrupted Religion. Eloquence, even of his own teaching, is insufficient to do Justice to his Character, who besides his own inherent Merit, justly claims a Share in every Virtue, and every Accomplishment of this illustrious Audience.

Sacred and inviolable, to all succeeding Ages, be the Names and Memories of these Encouragers and Promoters of a Learned and Religious Education; Eternal be their Reward in Heaven: but let all the Glory be ascribed as is most due, to God the Father, God the Son, and God the holy Ghost, to whom be all Honour, Might, Majesty and Dominion, both now and for evermore.
Amen.

FINIS.

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